



ATF News

**Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
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ATF ACTIVATES NRT FOR LAS VEGAS SCHOOL FIRE

LAS VEGAS – The National Response Team from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and the Las Vegas City Fire Department along with ATF special agents from Las Vegas have entered the investigation of a three-alarm fire that occurred today at the Roy Martin Middle School.

The fire, contained to the gymnasium area of the school, caused an estimated \$2.5 million in damages. Children participating in a City Summer Program were present at the school at the time of the blaze, but there were no injuries or fatalities reported. The Las Vegas Fire Department tried to suppress the fire, but the roof of the building became compromised and the building had to be evacuated. The roof collapsed minutes later.

ATF developed the National Response Team (NRT) in 1978 to assist federal, state, and local investigators in meeting the challenges faced at the scenes of significant arson and explosives incidents. The NRT consists of four teams organized geographically to cover the United States. Each team can respond within 24 hours to assist state and local law enforcement or fire service personnel in onsite investigations.

Each team is composed of veteran special agents who have post-blast and fire origin-and-cause expertise; forensic chemists; explosives enforcement officers; fire protection engineers; accelerant-detection canines; explosives-detection canines; intelligence support, computer forensic support and audit support. The teams work alongside state and local officers in reconstructing the scene, identifying the seat of the blast or origin of the fire, conducting interviews, and sifting through debris to obtain evidence related to the bombing/arson.

Although the NRT has been used predominantly to assist in the investigation of suspicious commercial fires, it has also been deployed to the scenes of major criminal bombings, as well as explosions at explosives and ammunition manufacturing plants, legal fireworks factories, and illegal explosive device manufacturing operations. The activation in Las Vegas is the 597th since the NRT program began.

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